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INQUIRE=DOC18D
ITEM ID=00490339
ENVELOPE
CDSN = LGX671 MCN = 92207/19072 TOR = 922071222
RTTCZYUW RUEKJCS1380 2071221-CCCC--RUEALGX.
ZNY CCCCC
HEADER
R 251221Z JUL 92
FM JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
INFO RUEADWD/OCSA WASHINGTON DC
RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC
RUEAHQA/CSAF WASHINGTON DC
RUCGDEF/NATS PENTAGON WASHINGTON DC
RUEADWD/PTC WASH DC
RUFGAID/USEUCOM AIDES VAIHINGEN GM
RUEKCCG/USDP-CCC WASHINGTON DC
RULSJGA/COGARD INTELCOORDCEN WASHINGTON DC
RUWTPGA/12 AF BERGSTROM AFB TX//IN//
RUCEAAM/HQ NORAD INTEL CEN CHEYENNE MTN AFB CO//J2V//
RUEOACC/CDRPSYOPGP FT BRAGG NC//AORC-POG-SB//
RUANJTF/CJTF FOUR
RHCGSRB/CINCFOR FT MCPHERSON GA//FCJ2-IC/FCJ3-OD//
RUWANGC/CJTF FIVE//J20//
RUWSMXI/AMC INTEL CEN SCOTT AFB IL//IN//
RUCQVAB/USCINCSOC INTEL OPS CEN MACDILL AFB FL
RUWANTX/CJTF SIX
RHLBAAA/USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM
RUEKQAN/MARCORINTCEN QUANTICO VA
RUEALGX/SAFE
R 242131Z JUL 92
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000
BT
CONTROLS
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LA PAZ 01879

E.O. 12356 N/A

/********** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE **********/
BODY
TAGS: SNAR, BL
SUBJECT: NARCOTICS CONTROL: AGUA RICA

REF: STATE 192876

1. IN RESPONSE TO REFTEL, EMBASSY LA PAZ HAS DEVELOPED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON AGUA RICA. THIS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
IS/FPC/CDR Date: 5/25/95
X RELEASE
( ) EXCISE
( ) DENY
( ) DELETE
FOIA Exemptions
PA Exemptions
X DECLASSIFY
( ) DECLASSIFY IN PART
Non-Responsive Info
MR Cases Only:
EO Citations
( ) CLASSIFY as ( ) S or ( ) C OADR
( ) DOWNGRADE TS to ( ) S or ( ) C OADR
TS authority to:

INFORMATION IS DERIVED FROM THE BOLIVIAN NATIONAL POLICE (UMOPAR) AND FROM DEBRIEFING NARCO-TRAFFICKER CHEMISTS. AGUA RICA BASE LABS, INTRODUCED BY THE COLOMBIANS, FIRST APPEARED IN BOLIVIA APPROXIMATELY TWO YEARS AGO.

2. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS KEYED TO THE QUESTIONS FOUND IN PARA FOUR OF REFTEL:

A. THE FIRST SMALL, CRUDE AGUA RICA BASE LABS APPEARED IN THE CHAPARE ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO. THE LABS WERE INSTIGATED BY COLOMBIAN TRAFFICKERS WHO PROVIDED MONEY TO CAMPESINOS SO THAT THEY COULD INDEPENDENTLY PRODUCE AGUA RICA BASE AT SMALL LAB SITES. AS A RESULT, AGUA RICA BASE LABS HAVE NOW PROLIFERATED THROUGHOUT THE CHAPARE. THIS DEVELOPMENT IS ANOTHER INDICATION OF THE COLOMBIANS EXPANDING INFLUENCE IN BOLIVIA.

B. ACCORDING TO NARCO-TRAFFICKER CHEMISTS, BOTH AGUA RICA BASE AND AGUA RICA PASTE HAVE AN UNLIMITED SHELF LIFE. THE BASE DIFFERS FROM PASTE IN THAT POTASSIUM PERMANGANATE HAS BEEN ADDED.

C. PRODUCING AGUA RICA BASE INSTEAD OF PROCESSING THE AGUA RICA PASTE THROUGH THE SOLID PASTE STAGE SAVES ABOUT FOUR HOURS IN PROCESSING TIME. IT IS ALSO THOUGHT TO SAVE MONEY BY ELIMINATING THE NEED FOR CERTAIN PRECURSORS - SUCH AS LIME AND BICARBONATE - AND BY REDUCING TRANSPORTATION COSTS, I.E. CONVERSION RATIOS FOR PASTE AND BASE TO HCL (SEE PARA H).

D. THE EMBASSY DOES NOT HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON EXPERIMENTS UNDERTAKEN TO DETERMINE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AGUA RICA. HOWEVER, NARCO-TRAFFICKER CHEMISTS CLAIM THE SUBSTANCE HAS AN UNLIMITED SHELF LIFE. CACHES OF AGUA RICA BASE THAT WERE BURIED UNDERGROUND IN PLASTIC CONTAINERS FOR OVER THREE MONTHS WERE FOUND TO BE STABLE AND STILL SUITABLE FOR FURTHER PROCESSING.

E. CURRENT SEIZURE STATISTICS AND INTEL REPORTS REVEAL THAT AGUA RICA BASE PRODUCTION LABS ARE SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE CHAPARE.

F. CONVERSION FROM AGUA RICA PASTE TO AGUA RICA BASE IS A VERY EASY PROCESS, UTILIZING POTASSIUM PERMANGANATE, SUBSEQUENTLY FILTERING OUT THE UNUSABLE BY-PRODUCTS. THE REMAINING LIQUID IS AGUA RICA BASE.

G. BASED ON ALL INTEL SOURCES AND SEIZURE STATISTICS, WE ESTIMATE THAT LESS THAN 5 PERCENT OF THE COCAINE BEING PRODUCED IN THE CHAPARE IS BEING MADE INTO COCA

PASTE.

NARCOTICS	JUNE 92	CY 1992 YTD	JUNE 91
COCAINE HCL (KG)	6.4	246.2	9.1
COCAINE BASE (KG)	460.8	3,502.6	460.7
COCAINE PASTE (KG)	0.0	9.1	114.8
AGUA RICA (L)	3,325.0	10,976.0	435.0
-PASTE EQUIV.(KG)	885.4	2,918.5	117.0
AGUA RICA (BASE)	360.0	19,917.0	N/A
-BASE EQUIV.(KG)	360.0	19,917.0	N/A
COCA LEAF (LB)	3,158.0	128.121.0	6,370.0

H. THE ADVANTAGES OF AGUA RICA BASE ARE ITS LONGER SHELF LIFE, THE ELIMINATION OF UNNECESSARY PROCESSING STEPS, AND A 1 TO 1 CONVERSION RATIO FROM BASE TO HCL VERSUS A 2.5 CONVERSION RATIO FROM PASTE TO BASE. BECAUSE BASE HAS THAT CONVERSION RATIO IT ALLOWS TRAFFICKERS TO DOUBLE THEIR PAYLOAD, THEREBY REDUCING TRANSPORTATION COSTS, AND, AS DESCRIBED IN PARA C ABOVE, TRAFFICKERS REALIZE ADDITIONAL SAVINGS BY ELIMINATING THE NEED FOR CERTAIN PRECURSOR CHEMICALS.

I. AGUA RICA BASE IS A PURPLISH LIQUID, WITH A PINKISH TINT. AGUA RICA PASTE ALSO HAS A PINKISH TINT, BUT IS MUCH CLEARER. IT IS THE ADDITION OF POTASSIUM PERMANGANATE WHICH CREATES THE TELLTALE PURPLISH TINT OF THE AGUA RICA BASE. FILTRATION TABLES CONTAINING DARK PURPLE POTASSIUM PERMANGANATE RESIDUE ARE ANOTHER CONFIRMING FACTOR. THE PRESENCE OF AMMONIA, NEEDED FOR THE FINAL STEP FOR BASE PR
ODUCTION ALSO CONFIRMS
THIS. THE PRESENCE OF THE FILTRATION TABLES AND THE AMMONIA, HOWEVER, INDICATE A BASE LAB NOT JUST AN AGUA RICA PRODUCTION SITE.

J. TESTING, ALBEIT UNSCIENTIFIC, WAS CONDUCTED IN 1990

/****** BEGINNING OF SECTION 002 ******/
USING NARCO-TRAFFICKER CHEMISTS AND LAB WORKERS ALREADY IN GOB CUSTODY. THE TESTING USED 380 LITERS OF SEIZED AGUA RICA PASTE, AND WAS CONDUCTED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE UMOPAR COMMANDER. THIS TEST

DEMONSTRATED THAT 3.75 LTRS. OF AGUA RICA PASTE

CONVERTED TO 1 KILO OF COCAINE PASTE. ADDITIONALLY, APPROXIMATELY ONE LITER OF AGUA RICA BASE COMBINED WITH POTASSIUM PERMANGANATE AND AMMONIA PRECIPITATED APPROXIMATELY 1 KILO OF WET COCAINE BASE.

K. AGUA RICA BASE IS PRODUCED THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE CHAPARE REGION.

L. YES, AGUA RICA BASE IS TRANSPORTED IN 5 GAL. PLASTIC CONTAINERS; 55 GAL. PLASTIC OR METAL FUEL DRUMS; OR IN MORE SOPHISTICATED METHODS OF CONCEALMENT SUCH AS IN COOKING OIL CONTAINERS, WOODEN BEER BARRELS, AND BEER BOTTLES. AIRCRAFT REMAIN THE PREFERRED METHOD OF TRANSPORTATION, BUT THE SUCCESS OF OPERATION GHOST ZONE IS FORCING TRAFFICKERS TO UTILIZE GROUND AND RIVER MEANS OF TRANSPORT TO THE LARGER NORTHERN LABS. AGAIN, PRIMARILY KILOGRAMS OF COMPLETED BASE REMAINS THE PREFERRED METHOD; HOWEVER, INCREASING AMOUNTS OF AGUA RICA BASE ARE BEING SEIZED.

M. POST HAS VERY LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF DILUTING BASE WITH MANNITOL, BUT INTEL SOURCES REPORT THAT CERTAIN COLOMBIAN TRAFFICKERS ARE UNHAPPY WITH THE QUALITY OF COCAINE BASE BEING PRODUCED IN CERTAIN AREAS. DILUTING BASE BY ADDING MANNITOL DOESN'T PERTAIN TO THE AGUA RICA BASE STAGE. IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDED TO THE BASE FOLLOWING CONVERSION FROM LIQUID TO SOLID.

,BOWERS
ADMIN
BT

#1381

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